

# Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: July 9, 2007

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 11(d)7: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority the preservation, protection and restoration of Temescal Gateway Park, Pacific Palisades.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the preservation, protection and restoration of Temescal Gateway Park, in the amount of \$550,000.

Legislative Authority: Section 33204(c) and 75060(d)(1) of the Public Resources Code.

Background: The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84), allocated funds to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy in Chapter 7, 75060(d)(1) of the Public Resources Code, for the protection of beaches, bays and coastal waters and watersheds, including projects to prevent the contamination and degradation of coastal waters and watersheds, projects to protect and restore the natural habitat values of coastal waters and lands, and projects and expenditures to promote the access to and enjoyment of the coastal resources of the state.

Public Resources Code Section 33204(c): “The Conservancy may, in accordance with the priorities of the plan . . . award grants to state agencies, cities, counties, resource conservation districts, and park and recreation districts for the purpose of acquiring sites identified as necessary for park, recreation, or conservation purposes and for development of essential related public facilities.”

Located in the Santa Monica Bay Watershed in the Pacific Palisades, Temescal Gateway Park is one of the most popular parks in the Santa Monica Mountains. The park encompasses 141 acres of oak and sycamore canyons, ridgetop views, and access to miles of trails in Topanga State Park, Will Rogers State Historic Park, and the 20,000-acre “Big Wild.” Park amenities include easy to moderate trails, picnic tables and grassy areas, restrooms, a camp store, meeting rooms, an auditorium, and classrooms.

Temescal Gateway Park is also the home to many educational and outreach programs for children, particularly the Field Science Program. These programs are dedicated to bringing

enriching, hands-on outdoor experiences to Los Angeles' under-served, urban youth. Professional naturalists lead students on a 3-day/2-night hands-on science program that aligns with the California State Science Content Standards adopted by the California State Board of Education. Many of the students who attend the program have never had this kind of outdoor adventure. Experiences like these expand students' perspectives of the world and can profoundly impact the course of their lives.

The MRCA's Interpretive Division is planning to increase the educational programs at Temescal. In order to accommodate the increased youth participation, some of the park's facilities need to be upgraded. The existing cabins are in dire need of refurbishment, both inside as well as exteriors and roof replacements. All of the restrooms in the cabins and the adjacent shower building need to be updated. The landscaping around these structures also could use upgrading. Areas around the recently constructed dormitories and the refurbished dining hall are also in need of planting. The three classrooms, sitting uphill from the dormitories, need refurbishment as well. The restrooms serving these buildings need to be upgraded. The landscaping in this area needs restoring as well.

In addition to these building renovations, multiple public use and ecological areas throughout the park are in need of improvement. Restoration of the stream as it passes through the built section of the canyon is a high priority. The removal of non-native eucalyptus trees has left some areas in need of habitat restoration. There are opportunities to add sycamores, willows and other riparian plants. Further back in the canyon, an old restroom building needs to be restored to better serve the public. Down by Platform Oak, staff would like to install a new lawn to create an additional informal picnic area. Throughout the park, picnic tables and benches need to be replaced and added; fencing needs to be repaired; and irrigation needs to be upgraded to provide more and better opportunities for public use.

The MRCA proposes to install additional fire safety measures in the canyon that are necessary to protect the existing resources. These measures will include but not be limited to the installation of water tanks, the creation of safe storage for flammable maintenance products like oil, gas and paint, and the relocation of equipment storage.

Consideration: The grant to the MRCA would be in the amount of \$550,000.